

Idaho Achievement Standards—Social Studies

The goal of education in government and civics is informed, responsible participation in political life by competent citizens committed to the fundamental values and principles upon which American society is based. Ultimately, a free society must rely on the knowledge, skills, and virtues of its citizens and those elected to public office. Civic education, therefore, is essential to the preservation and improvement of American representative government.



Idaho Department of Education

P.O. Box 83720
Boise, Idaho 83720-0027
Email: dlprinzing@sde.idaho.gov or
pgkavouras@sde.idaho.gov

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CIVIC LEARNING: CON STITUTION DAY

Schools will provide instruction and activities necessary for students to acquire the skills to enable them to be responsible citizens in their homes, schools, communities, state and nation.

Rules of the Board Governing
Education, 08.02.03.170



September 17

Constitution Day

Idaho's legislators recognized the importance of understanding the United States Constitution as a living document and its impact in our everyday lives; addressed in Idaho Code, section 33-1602, "instruction in the Constitution of the United States shall be given in all elementary and secondary schools." Additionally, Idaho Code 73-108B identifies that "September 17 shall be designated as constitutional commemorative day."

In December 2004, the United States Congress passed Public Law 108-447, requiring that "Each educational institution that receives Federal funds for a fiscal year shall hold an educational program on the United States Constitution on September 17 of such year for the students served by the educational institution."

As Dr. Marilyn Howard, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, notes *One of public education's most important tasks is to help student's become informed and involved citizens. The U.S. is a free and democratic society because generation after generation took its civic responsibilities seriously. This nation's future depends on our citizenry's commitment to these ideals.*

The following list of available resources should assist your school in designing an instructional plan for Constitution Day.



Lawyers in the Classroom: Partners in Education, a program of the Idaho Law Foundation, encourages and prepares lawyers and teachers to work together to teach students about the law and citizenship. Attorneys are available to speak on Constitution Day. Contact Becky Jensen, LRE Program Director, Idaho Law Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 895, Boise, ID 83701. Voice (208) 334-4500 or bjensen@isb.idaho.gov

The Center for Civic Education, a nonprofit, non-partisan educational corporation dedicated to fostering the development of informed, responsible participation in civic life by citizens committed to values and principles fundamental to American constitutional democracy, has developed a series of K-12 lessons specific to Constitution Day. The Center has entered into a collaboration with the American Association of School Administrators who will distribute the lesson plans electronically to school administrators; the lesson plans are also available online at www.civiced.org.

The Bill of Rights Institute has developed a free package of educational and programming materials to help teachers observe Constitution Day. Lessons focus on the exceptional nature of the American Constitution and challenge students to reflect on the meaning of the Preamble and the seven Articles; materials are available at www.BillofRightsInstitute.org/ConstitutionDay.

The **Library of Congress** is a repository for Constitutional documents and information and may be accessed at: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/bdsds/bdsdhome.html>

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The **National Archives** has a website with a scan of the U.S. Constitution available at http://www.archives.gov/national_archives_experience/charters/constitution.html.



The National Constitution Center offers educational and programming materials to help schools organize events to commemorate Constitution Day. Materials are available at www.constitutionday.us

Justice Talking, NPR's award-winning radio series—in cooperation with the National Archives and Records Administration, *The New York Times* Knowledge Network, and other civics education partners—will broadcast two programs on September 16, online and via satellite. Available without charge, the first program is a conversation with Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and Stephen Breyer and 50 high school students understanding the importance and relevance of the Constitution; the second is a debate on "Free Speech in the Digital Age—a look at censorship in libraries, of textbooks, and on the Internet." Schools can register online at www.justicelearning.org.

The Idaho Department of Education's - Social Studies webpage provides online lessons for Constitution Day; lessons are available at <http://www.sde.state.id.us/instruct/socialstudies/> or contact Peter Kavouras, social studies coordinator, at pgkavouras@sde.idaho.gov.